(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the report appearing in the Indian Express dated 1st April, 1993 regarding depleting habitat in the Neriyamangalam Range Forcing the Elephants in the sanctuary to take on the settlers around with the increasing Summer Heat; and

(b) if so, what steps are contemplated by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH): (a) and (b) Government has seen the reports. While the possibility of fire or non-availability of water and depletion of fodder in the habitat, partly due to degradation and partly due to the drying up of the ponds, trees and grass during summer leading to an escalation of man-elephant conflict in the area can not be ruled out, there is no scientific evidence to suggest that the conflict is aggravated by the heat perse.

Project Elephant, launched by Govt. of India aims at understanding the causes of such conflicts and assisting the State Governments for mitigation of such problems. Restoration of elephant habitat, restoration of migration corridors and plantation of fodder species are some of the main activities covered under the scheme. The State Govt. of Kerala was provided assistance of Rs. 120.00 lacks and Rs. 14.02 lacks under the scheme during 1991-92 and 1992-93 respectively.

Involving the industries in forestry in the Country

1048. SHRI ANANT RAM JAISWAL :

SHRI SATYA PRAKASH MALAVIYA :

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government are considering a proposal to involve the industries in the country in forestry; and

(b) if so, what are the details of the decision if any, taken in this regard stating the manner in which the industries are proposed to be involved in the forestry ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH): (a) No proposal to involve industries in the forestry in the country is under consideration of the Government.

(b) Does not arise.

Mining rejects dumped in the sea

1049. SHRI JOHN F. FERNANDES : Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that mining rejects are dumped in the sea at Redi, Maharashtra, thus causing water pollution and endangering marine life;

(b) if so, what remedial steps are contemplated to avert this environmental disaster; and

(c) whether the mining firm has been penalised for degrading environment ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH) : (a) to (c) The Government issued notices to the two mining project authorities at Redi to stop dumping of the mine rejects

in the coastal water. They were also advised to submit an Environmental Management Plan with regard to mining activities. The Ministry is constantly following up the matter with the mining authorities for the Environmental Management Plan.

Ban on use of wood in Government Construction

1050. SHRI JOHN F. FERNANDES: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government have imposed ban on use of wood in Government constructions;

(b) if so, since when; and

(c) whether Government would also consider banning of wooden furniture in the Departments and see that metalic and plastic material will be used to conserve trees ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH): (a) and (b) Central Public Works Department has taken a decision that no timber shall be used in C.P.W.D. works being started from 1-4-93. However, in respect of any prestigious work where use of timber is unaviodable, prior permission of Director General (Works) would be required.

(c) It is not practically feasible to ban copmpletely the use of wocden furnitures in the Government Departments, however, it has been decided that all Government Offices, autonomous organisations and public sector undertakings should discourage purchase of wooden furniture to the maximum extent.

Conservation of Biodiversity

1051. SHRI BISHAMBER NATH PANDE: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the conservation of biodiversity has acquired unprecedented importance recently;

(b) if so, what are the details thereof and what are the reasons therefor; and

(c) what measures Government have adopted to conserve the biodiversity ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH): (a) and (b) Conservation of biological diversity (biodiversity) has received special importance worldwide in the wake of the intergovernmental negotiations culminating in the signing of the Convention on Biodiversity by 160 countries during the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development held in June 1992 at Rio de Janeiro (Brazil).

(c) The measures taken for the conservation of biodiversity in India include :

i. Legislation such as the Indian Forest Act, 1927, the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980, and the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 supported by different State laws, regulations, etc.

ii. Policy framework through the National Wildlife Action Plan (1973), the National Forest Policy (1988), and the National Conservation Strategy and Policy Statement on Environment and Development (1992).